

The amoral cesspit that is Johnsonâ€™s government

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Three reports in The Guardian are telling this morning. The [first refers](#) to the cuts in the UK's overseas aid budget, on which more detail was issued yesterday:

The UK has released the first details of how it intends to impose as much as £4bn worth of cuts to [international aid](#), prompting campaigners to accuse the government of having “lost its moral compass”.

The [second refers](#) to a report by Transparency International on concern about corruption in UK government Covid contracting:

One in five government Covid contracts awarded between February and November 2020 contained one or more red flags for possible corruption and require urgent further investigation, a respected campaign group has warned.

Transparency International UK said a “seriously flawed” arrangement, whereby companies bidding for contracts were prioritised if they were referred into a “VIP lane” by their political connections, had “damaged trust in the integrity of the pandemic response”.

Around £2 billion of favoured contracts are thought to be involved.

The [third refers](#) to Johnie Mercer MP, who was sacked before he could resign as a minister yesterday:

The former veterans’ minister Johnny Mercer has launched an extraordinary attack on Boris Johnson’s government, describing it as a “cesspit” and “the most distrustful, awful environment I’ve ever worked in”.

I would not wish to overvalue Mercer's opinion, or experience. And yet the three articles share a common theme. And that is that there is a moral crisis at the heart of this government. Or rather, there is an absence of morality anywhere near this government. And it is that absence that permits the corruption that is now seen as its major defining trait.

How did we get to this?